

REMARKS

Claims 17-18, 21-38 and 41 through 45 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1-41 are cancelled. No new matter is added.

The Examiner states at page 2 of the Office Action that claims 32 and 33 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 32 and 33 have been cancelled. Claims 42 through 45 include all of the limitations of claims 32 and 33, as well as the base claims and intervening claims from which claims 32 and 33 depend.

Rejection of Claim 17 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Fitzpatrick et. al. (U.S. Pat. 5,710,009).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

To expedite prosecution and without acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants have cancelled claim 17 thereby rendering the above rejection moot.

Rejection of Claims 17, 18, 21-26, 31 and 34-38 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 17, 18, 21-26, 31 and 34-38 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) for allegedly being anticipated by Hochstrasser et al (US Pat. 5,565,352).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

To expedite prosecution and without acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants have cancelled claims 17, 18, 21-26, 31 and 34-38, thereby rendering the above rejection moot.

Rejection of Claims 17 and 41 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 17 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being alleged anticipated by Avruch et al (US Pat. 5,582,995) in light of Avruch et al (US Pat. 5,736,337).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

To expedite prosecution and without acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants have cancelled claims 17 and 41 thereby rendering the rejection moot.

Rejection of Claims 17, 18, 21-27, 31 and 41, Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Examiner has maintained the rejection of claims 17, 18, 21-27, 31 and 41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being allegedly anticipated by Beach et al (U.S. 6,037,136).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

To expedite prosecution and without acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants have cancelled claims 17, 18, 21-27, 31 and 41, thereby rendering the above-rejection moot.

Claim Rejections under Obviousness-type Double Patenting

Claims 18, 21-25, 34-35 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-12 of U.S. Patent No. 6,656,696. The Office Action states that although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other.

Claims 18 is rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-6 of U.S. Patent No. 6,670,144. The Office Action states that although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other.

Claims 18, 21-25, and 34-35 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,465,199. The Office Action states that although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other.

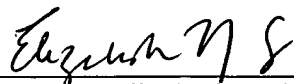
Claims 21-30, 34-35 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-2, 4-8, 10-14 of U.S. Patent Application 09/511,776. The Office Action states that although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other.

To expedite prosecution and without acquiescing to the rejection, Applicants have cancelled claims 18, 21-30 and 34-35, thereby rendering the above-rejection moot.

Applicant submits that all claims are allowable as written and respectfully request early favorable action by the Examiner. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with Applicant's attorney/agent would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned attorney/agent of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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Name: Elizabeth N. Spar

Registration No.: 45,123

Customer No.: 29933

Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP

P.O. Box 55974

Boston, MA 02205

Tel. (617) 239-0100